1: Jochelson E-5 (1900-01) 1908 RY4 Koryak RY4

VI. — BIRTH, DEATH, AND FUNERALS.

775 842 BIRTH. — Before a child is born, the Supreme Being sends into the mother's womb the soul (uyi'čit) of some deceased relative of the child to be born. The length of life of each soul is determined beforehand. Souls are hanging on the cross-beams of the house of The-One-on-High. The duration of the earthly life of the future possessor of the soul is marked by the strap which is attached to the soul's neck or thumb. The shorter the strap, the shorter will be the life of the new-born. A drawing made by the Koryak Yulta, already described (see Fig. 40, p. 93), illustrates the Koryak idea of souls hanging in the house of the Supreme Being.

851 553 774 787 As soon as a child is born, it is given the name of the dead relative whose soul has been reborn in it. The father of the new-born uses a divining-stone called Little-Grandmother (An·a'pel) to discover whose soul has entered the child. The divining-stone is hung by a string to a stick, the latter is lifted, and the stone begins to swing; or it is hung from a tripod made of small sticks. The father of the child enumerates the names of the deceased relatives on his and his wife's side. When the name of the relative whose soul has entered the child is mentioned, the divining-stone begins to swing quicker. Another way of determining the identity of the soul is by observation of the behavior of the child itself. A number of names are mentioned. If the child cries while a name is pronounced, it shows that it is not the name of the soul reborn in the child. When the proper name is pronounced, the child stops crying, or begins to smile. After the name has been given, the father takes the child in his arms, carries it out from the sleeping-tent into the house, and says to his people, "A relative has come" (Qaitu'mñin ye'ti). On one occasion during our stay in the village of Kamenskoye, a child was named after the deceased father-in-law of Yulta's son. The latter lifted the child, and said to the mother, "Here, thy father has come!"

If a mistake is made in divining the identity of the soul which entered the new-born child, something will ail the child after it has been named. Then this mistake may be corrected, and its name is usually changed by means of repeated divination.

Neither I myself nor my wife was present at a confinement, nor did we witness the divining while the child was named.[1] What I am going to describe here is recorded from what the Koryak have told me.

[1] In every village, I made inquiries about pregnant women, asking them to call my wife when the confinement should take place, that she might become acquainted with the Koryak methods of midwifery; but the Koryak concealed all births from us. On two occasions women were confined in the villages where we were staying, but we learned of it only *post factum*.

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which the husband shut his eyes to his wife's liaison with their herdsman; but the husband was a sickly man, and, besides, the herd belonged to his wife. I learned of another curious case on the Taigonos Peninsula. A man, being informed that his wife was visited by his neighbor while he himself was absent, said to the offender, "If you like my wife, don't visit her secretly, but take her altogether, only give me your daughter in exchange." The neighbor complied with so wise a proposal, and they exchanged the women; the neighbor, as luck would have it, having a grown-up daughter.

TREATMENT OF CHILDREN. — The birth of a child is a joyous event, and marked by a feast, to which guests are invited from other houses, or, among the Reindeer Koryak, from other camps. This festivity is called Añanavisxatin ("woman's feast"). Among the Maritime Koryak, all women and girls of the village are invited in. Men are not admitted at all; even the master of the house leaves his home. The main dish consists of gruel or pudding made of flour, blood, meat, and fat. This pudding is called ta'knañoika ("bearing-blessing"), symbolizing the future welfare of the child. The Reindeer Koryak, on the occasion of the birth of a child, kill one or more reindeer, and invite men and women to the feast; but the women eat apart from the men, in the sleeping-tent of the young mother, while the house-master entertains the men in the outer tent. The Reindeer Koryak make the same kind of pudding as the Maritime Koryak, and call it by the same name.

I have already spoken[1] of the taboos to which the young mother is subjected, of the care taken to guard the child against evil spirits, and of the divination ceremony while giving a name to the new-born. According to the statements of Koryak women, confinement is easy. In each settlement there is an experienced woman who acts as a midwife. The navel-string is cut with an ordinary iron knife. This knife is not used again until the child is able to walk. The new-born child is rubbed with moss, and immediately placed in a combination-suit,[2] which takes the place of a cradle. The child is rocked by the mother in her arms, or placed in bed by her own side. On the flap[3] between the child's legs moss is laid, which is frequently changed. The child is nursed up to the age of two or three years, unless a second pregnancy of the mother prevents her from doing so. At a very early age the child is given pieces of fat of reindeer or seal to suck. I was told that, if the mother dies during or soon after confinement, the child is killed and cremated with the mother, as artificial feeding is impossible with the Koryak's means of existence.

The Koryak are very fond of children. They take good care of them and fondle them. Children are beaten very rarely, and yet they are meek and obedient. I have often marvelled at the authority exercised by the elders over the children. I related the case[4] of a girl of about nine who consented

[1] See Part I, pp. 100, 101. [2] See p. 601. [3] See p. 602. [4] See p. 591.